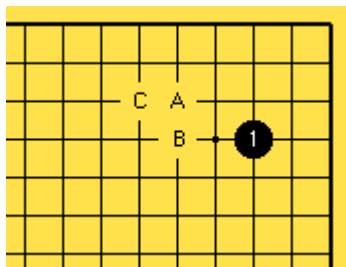


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Gentle Joseki, part I by Pieter Mioch

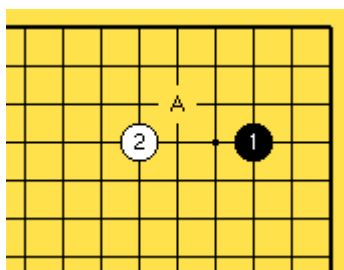
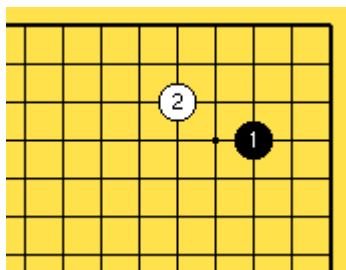
The patterns



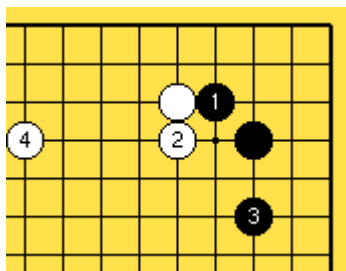
Dia 1 An opening move at the 4-3 point (komoku) is basically a typical way of not regarding the center important as yet. Komoku had for centuries been the focus of almost every game in Japan and profound research dealing with the 4-3 point was constantly going on. (this explains why even today there are more komoku joseki's than all the other opening moves put together) In dia 1 black's aim is to make a corner enclosure (shimari) with A, B, or C. Black thus spending two moves in the corner gets cash profit but in doing so it'll take longer before he can start to emphasize the center. This is

because the orthodox and still popular way of developing in the opening is to first claim the corners, then the sides, and last, as an afterthought the center.

It should be kept in mind that either making a shimari yourself or preventing your opponent from making a shimari is regarded of equal value (miai). It is in most cases, if not all very hard to say that making a shimari is clearly better than preventing your opponent from making one. A good idea for any player, be it dan or kyu, is to experiment freely with both styles of playing. Games will most likely develop completely different, providing an opportunity to be amazed and learn, which is all it takes to improve rapidly.

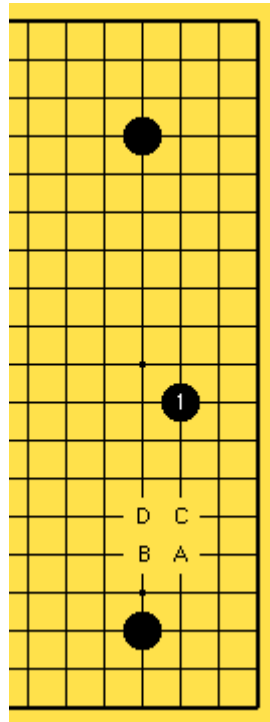
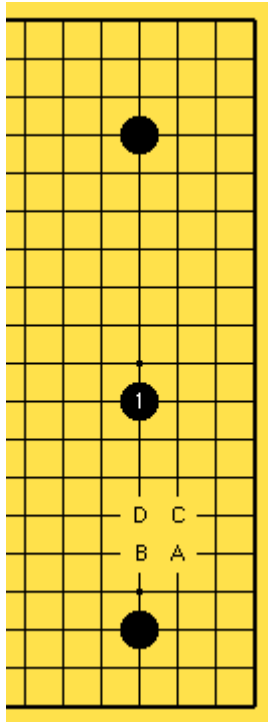


Dia 2 and **dia 3** show moves which prevent black from making a shimari. White's move 2 in dia 2 is much more common than 2 in dia 3 since dia 3 actually leaves a big piece of the corner to enclose, for example black can play at A and secure at least 12 points.

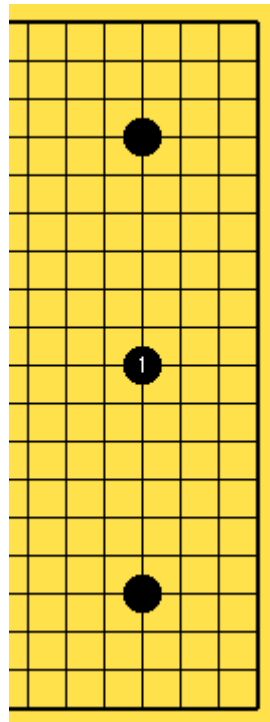
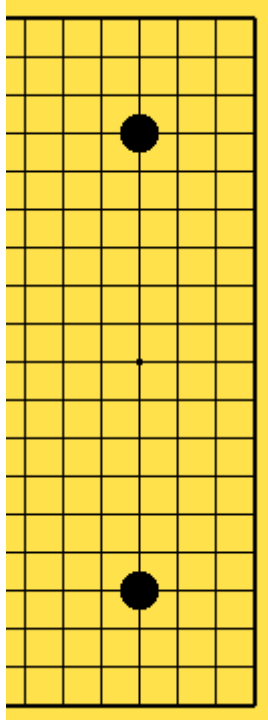


It is true that even in dia 2 black can secure about 12 points with the sequence shown in **dia 2A**.

This way of playing however, is regarded as giving too much away for too little, it is rarely seen in professional games. White's shape on the left side is nice and he has no complaints.



In **dia 4** and **dia 5** you can see the so called high and low Chinese Fuseki patterns, this is an intriguing way of playing since black's strategy by purposefully not making a shimari is to invite white to play an approach move to the corner (kakari) at A-D. If white plays here black hopes to put his stone at the side, 1 to good use and make it hard for white to settle himself. White most of the time declines the invitation and plays somewhere on the left side instead.



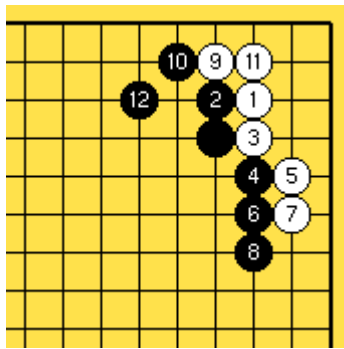
(Ikezaki) "Go Seigen for his part was more concerned with speed than anything else. He felt that taking time to solidify the corner with 2 moves was much too laid back an approach to the game, especially when playing white" (games in Japan during the first half of this century were largely played without komi and black had the advantage of playing the first move).

Kitani and Go might have had different goals in mind but they both came around to the same conclusion, komoku (4-3) or other asymmetrical opening moves (5-3, 5-4) need a follow up move (again in the corner) and do not develop towards the center and also do not develop one's stones very fast.

This was why they made the hoshi (4-4) play a standard opening move, and, a little after that the ni-ren-sei (**dia 6**) and san-ren-sei (**dia 7**).

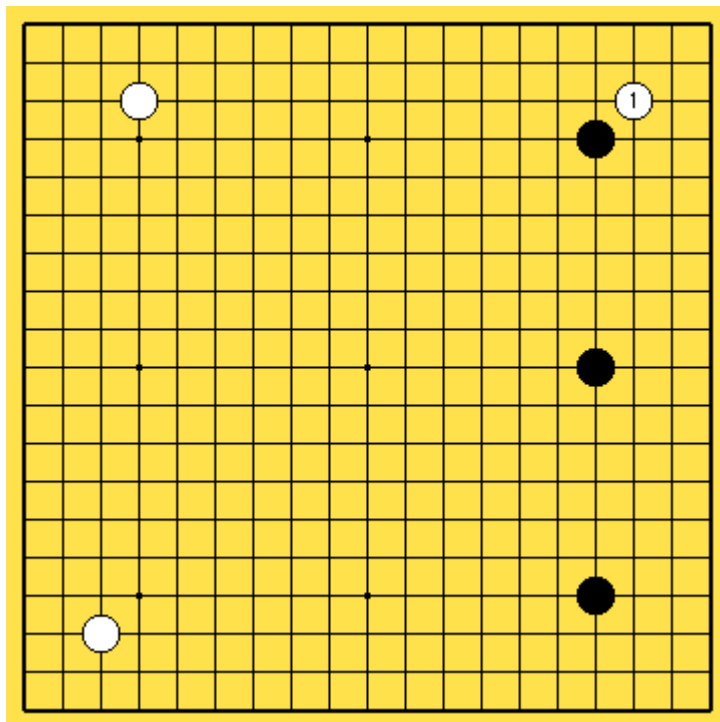
(Ikezaki) "That Kitani and Go's views differ is best explained by the san-san (3-3) move Go came up with. Anybody can see that such a low move does not do much towards the center. Go, however, was perfectly content with it because, similar to the hoshi play the san-san move does not require a follow up move, enabling black to develop rapidly."

Nowadays the 4-4 move is extremely popular because of its relative simplicity and speedy development. Of course however, there is one major drawback to the hoshi play: on its own it barely makes any territory at all!

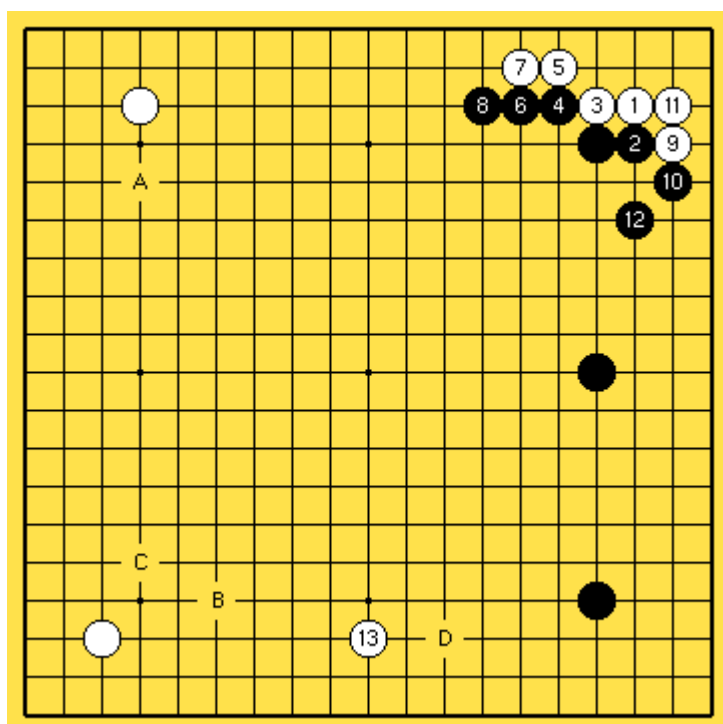


Dia 8 As long as black has not any stones in the vicinity white can enter the corner at 3-3 and for example, initiate the joseki up to black 12. Black plays the last move here (he ends in 'gote') and white can play elsewhere first (he has 'sente'). For black the idea of omitting 12 and play elsewhere is not an option, since white will cut immediately left of 2, ruining black's position. So, although black played in the corner first his opponent can invade at the 3-3 point, make 10 points of territory and play elsewhere (tenuki) first! Put it like this and you might have a hard time believing that this result actually favors black, big time. In spite of all the

aforementioned, black's thickness is usually worth much more than the 10 points white took in the corner. For one thing, after white invaded black can chose where he wants to block off white. If at 2 in the diagram his thickness will come to face to the left. If at 3 black's wall will come to face the lower half of the right side.



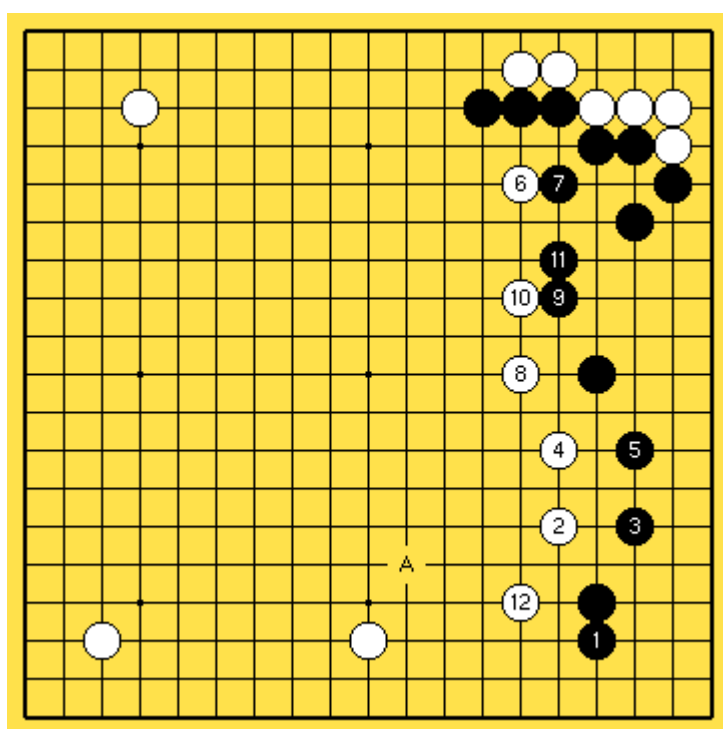
Realizing this white should think twice before deciding to jump into the corner in **dia 9**. Playing at 1 here is bad timing: black has no problem giving up the corner in order to create formidable thickness, which might well turn out to be worth over 40 points!



This is shown in **dia 10** where you can see that black gets a promising game right from the start. After white 13 black does not need to do anything special, a play at A is good enough. If black really wants to he can see what happens if he plays at B, white C and black D. Black can permit himself to create a potentially weak group (stone B) in white's sphere of influence since his overall board position is rock-solid. By the way, black cannot play around 13 first and forget about playing at 12.

Whatever happens one thing to keep in mind when looking at dia 10 is that black should not look at his position on the right as being secure territory yet. Using the right side to set up a moyo (oversized territory) of roughly the size of for example 80+ points is

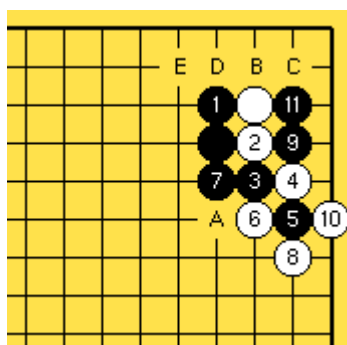
a good idea. For example a play at A (instead of black 1) in dia 11 shows the right spirit. To think however, that black now quickly must at least secure 40 points of territory as compensation for losing the corner is a mistake. Such a rigid state of mind is easily exploited by white who can play a number of forcing moves on the borderline of black's territory. If black docile were to answer all white forcing moves (kikashi) protecting his territory it'll be inevitable that black turns out to be using too many stones to secure a small part of the board (kori-gatachi).



Black 1 in **dia 11** is on its own maybe not such a bad move. However, if black 1 is played with the idea of securing black's territory as fast as possible then it is no good. The sequence up to 12 shows a worst case scenario. White doesn't even need to bother with an invasion on the right side (although this is of course possible) in order to get a promising game. If black is set on making the right side into solid territory he'll defend at 3-11. These moves disregard the proper usage of thickness and lack in fighting spirit. Black, to be sure, does get solid territory, about 40 points but he normally should not be able to win this game, his stones are all concentrated on the right side and much too singular in their purpose

(they do not attack or threaten to do anything)

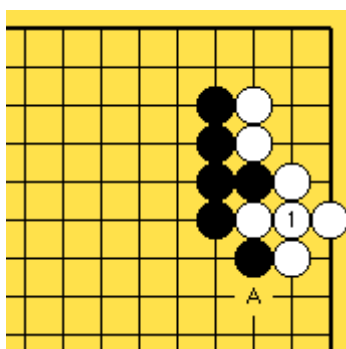
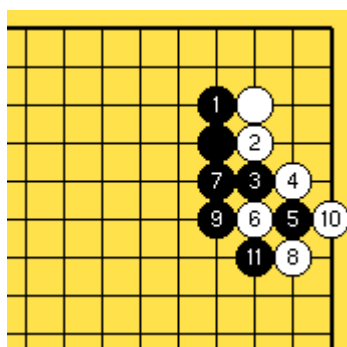
In other words, it is often not advisable to try to use a hoshi stone in a territory-oriented manner right from the start. Therefore, if at an early stage of the game your opponent chooses to enter at the 3-3 point this should often be welcomed!



Dia 12 Let's take a closer look at what to do after white's 3-3 invasion. It is worthwhile to memorize at least three variations by heart. The sequence shown in dia 8 is number one and the most peaceful.

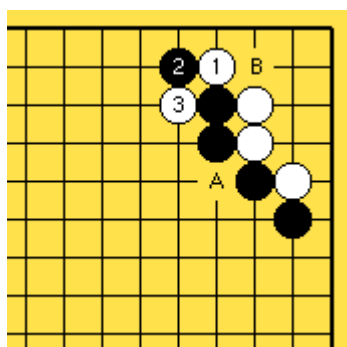
The ni-dan-bane combination with black 3 and 5 (double diagonal move) is very popular since this usually lets black get the corner back. Although white might sometimes want to play elsewhere (tenuki) after black 11 a play at A is extremely big. Not only does white make his position virtually invulnerable, he also can aim at exploiting the lack of liberties of black's 1-3-7 stones. After white

A, black elsewhere, white B, black C, white D and black E, black can only just capture the white stones because he has one liberty more. He should, however, be very careful what happens to his own outside liberties during the game.

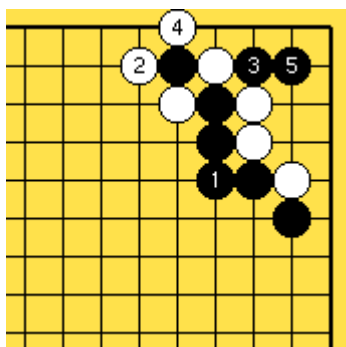


Note that the cut at 9 is just one possible continuation, sometimes high ranked players prefer to let white have the corner and instead of black 9 play **dia 13**. By playing on the outside with 9 black clearly goes for thickness towards the left and center instead of taking profit in the corner. Another aim however, could very well be to obtain sente by playing elsewhere in case white

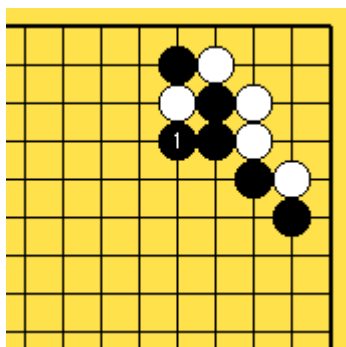
connects the ko with 1 as in **dia 14**. But, black must be prepared for a tricky ko fight if white does not connect at 1 but instead counters his atari with A. Finally the last variation, and a tricky one at that.



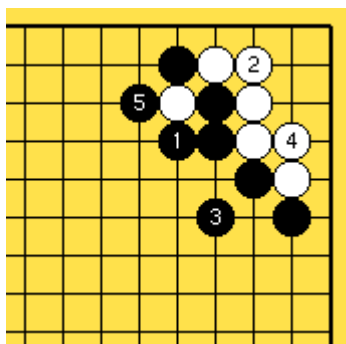
Dia 15 White 1 and 3 are testing black's intentions and perhaps also his knowledge of joseki. White 3 shows excellent fighting spirit, aiming at the double atari at A in spite of the obvious weakness of white's own stones. If black were to play at B next white would without hesitation play A, and whatever the continuation get a good result.



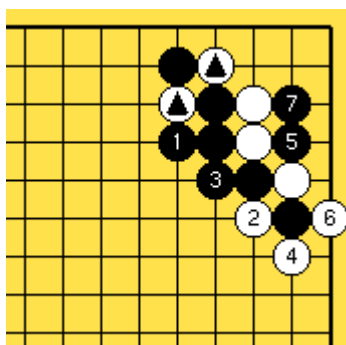
Dia 16 shows how to keep things simple and get a good result for black. Although the sequence starting with black 1 is a basic joseki I think that black has a nice corner with no hidden nastiness (warui aji) waiting around to haunt him. White'd better be sure his shape at the left (ponnuki) is serving some kind of purpose there taking the whole board situation in account, otherwise he should stick to the sequence shown in dia 12.



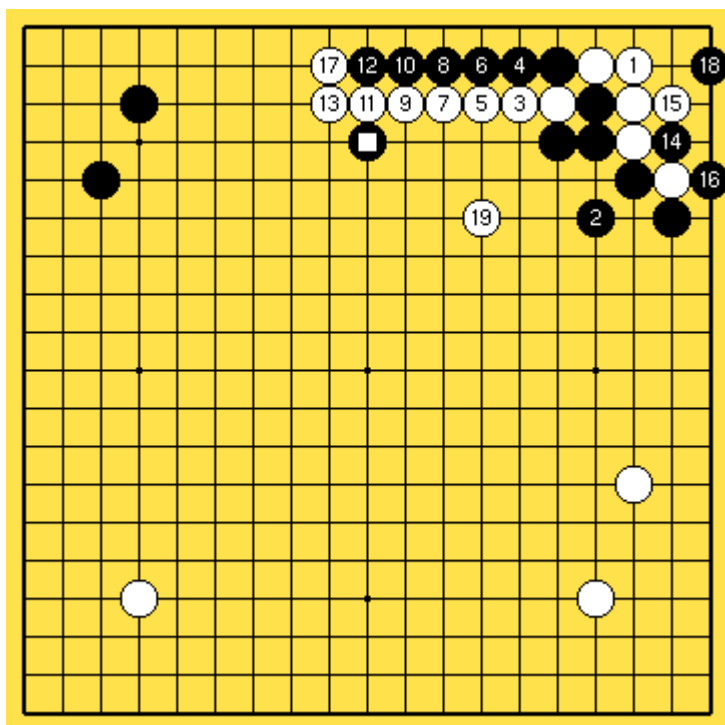
The reason why I called this variation tricky is this forceful move black 1 in **dia 17**, which black sometimes can play if he is careful.



Dia 18 If white has to defend with 2 and 4 then black can get a solid, thick position. This result favors black.



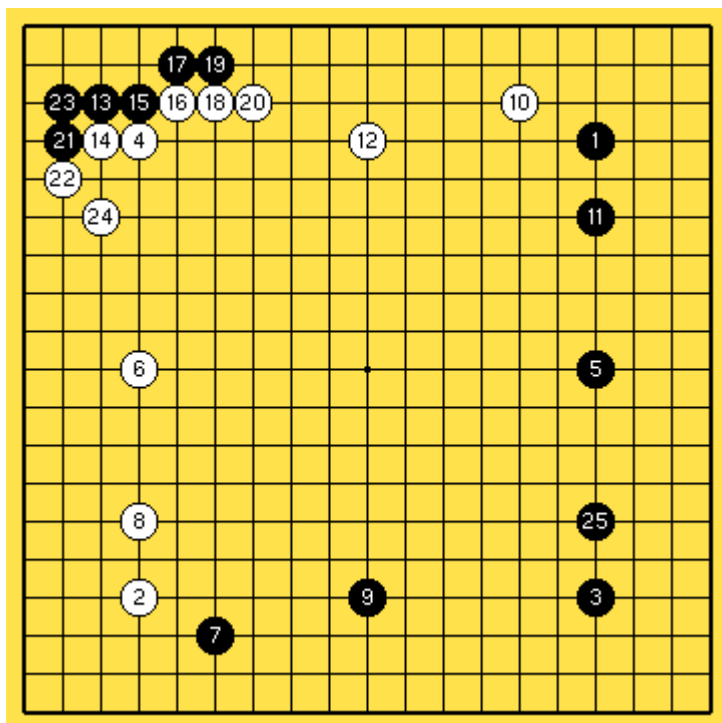
Dia 19 When white tries to fall back on the original joseki (dia 12) and captures a black stone with 2-4-6 the result is a disaster: the triangle marked stones have now become wasted moves.



Dia 20 This diagram shows how frightening joseki can be. Moving out with 3 white sets his stone in motion instead of making eyes in the corner at 14 (=4 in dia 18), and in doing so is sacrificing the corner but?

Although no black stones die he is losing the game already once the sequence up to white 19 is set in motion. Crawling on the second line is not to black's liking but you can say that he captures the corner as compensation for that. The position of the square marked black stone however, is pitiful having all but died being plastered against the white stones as it is. Furthermore, attacking the white stones has become pretty difficult and black's shimari is not doing much, black is bound to lose this game because of a lack of territory.

Black 1 in dia 17 is sometimes possible but shouldn't be played lightly.



Dia 21 To give you an idea of when a pro plays under the 4-4 point of his opponent let's take a look at dia 21. This is a game between Japanese top pro's. In case of white's 4-6-12 formation is entering at the 3-3 point, like in the game, often something to consider. Once black invades it is difficult for white to put both 6 and 12 to optimal use. In this game white's exchange of the moves 10-11 as well as the position of 12 is not entirely to his liking. Black 25 is a moyo making move still leaving white some room to enter. It is, however, not so easy to tell when and where white should play. ([Shimamura Toshihiro versus Fujisawa Hosai](#), 1961, black wins by resignation in 171 moves).

Appendix 01

Index of joseki's mentioned in this episode:

